

ENOUGH

A Jewish Girl's Search for Truth

Sometimes you have to be broken before you can be fixed.

When I was born in Colorado Springs, my parents subscribed to no faith. My mother, a secular Jew, and my father, an atheist from a Catholic background, did not intend to raise their children with any knowledge of God, let alone Christ.

Those plans did not change until I was in third grade, and my mother began taking my brother and me to a Reform Jewish synagogue. There I learned the Hebrew alphabet and dreamed about one day going to Israel.

At home, however, the only life I had known was crumbling around me. I was exposed to drug abuse, mental illness, and alcoholism. Eventually, my parents divorced. While the instability caused a heavy burden, the synagogue remained a constant in my ever-changing life.

I Loved Learning Torah

To become a Bat Mitzvah, I started studying the Torah with a local rabbi. This love of learning soon would take me to a Jewish boarding school in North Carolina. Before leaving Colorado, I became depressed, something

I did not understand as a 13-year-old. While I eventually learned to cope, I continued to struggle mentally and emotionally.

My four years at boarding school included personal struggles. The one that never seemed to go away was a deep-seated feeling of inadequacy. Despite my best attempts to be perfect, I felt swallowed up by a lack of confidence.

Even amid troubles, I cherished my time at school, singing in prayer services, and learning Jewish history and the Bible. The pinnacle of my immersion into Judaism came during three months of study in Israel.

I did not become strict with rabbinic Jewish observance until college, where I got involved with campus organizations such as *Hillel* and *Chabad*. There, a rabbi's wife introduced me to the idea of *Chassidus*, a sect of Jewish thought that teaches *Meshiach* (Messiah) will one day come to redeem the world.

Chassidus teaches that even the inception of sin in the Garden of Eden was part of God's plan to bring humans to the lowest level of reality so they could help God make the earth a holier place. It also suggests that Jews, more than any other people, can bring the world to a state of readiness for *Meshiach* by carrying out the *mitzvot* (commandments or Law).

I Thought I Was Getting Closer To The Truth

These ideas were new to me, and I was inspired. I felt there was a purpose in life and desired to learn the Law in depth so I could carry out God's will. I thought I was getting closer to the Truth.

I strived to do my best in all areas of life. The key word, of course, is "best" because I started realizing I could not keep the Law. My lack of self-worth only intensified when I realized I could never perfectly do what God wanted.

Then came the day when I deeply wronged someone close to me. Shaken by the realization of my sinful action and the hurt it caused, I called my father who had come to believe in God. Without knowing the specific details, he encouraged me to pray to Jesus.

I hung up the phone and pondered Jesus for a while. Not wanting to deviate from my chosen path, though, I instead asked the rabbi's wife for advice. She told me that praying would help atone for my sin, so I continued to do that and tried to fulfill the Law.

What If Jesus Is Who He Said He Is

Several years later, I met Nathan who is now my husband. Before we began dating, I found out he is a believer in Jesus Christ. During one of our early dates, I got teary-eyed as we discussed Judaism, the Bible, and

Jesus. I had a bit of an “existential crisis” as I thought: “What if Jesus is who He said He is?” From then on, I started to see holes in my longtime concept of faith.

I began going to church with Nathan on Sundays. He asked that I attend three Sunday services before leaving for my planned five-month trip to Israel, where I wanted to learn more about the Law and hoped to find truth.

The week I was scheduled to leave, Israel shut its borders to Americans because of COVID, so I stayed home and continued to date Nathan and attend church on most Sundays.

This routine went on for months, until his church held a missions conference and I heard preaching that convicted my heart. I was more unsettled than ever. I felt so lost. Fears flooded in about what everyone, especially the Jewish people in my life, would think if I professed faith in Jesus.

My first thought the next day was to find a book I remembered hearing about: “Mere Christianity” by C.S. Lewis. Once I started reading, I could not stop. I soon met with a friend of Nathan’s family who had ministered in Israel. She gave me more books and offered words of encouragement. The following Sunday at church, I heard the preaching of the gospel from the book of

Luke about a Jewish man named Zacchaeus, who the pastor called “a successful sinner.”

I Admitted I Needed Salvation Too

The Bible spoke to me, because while I had sorrows, I always had a feeling of gratitude for my life and felt successful despite my circumstances. When I heard about a successful Jewish sinner such as Zacchaeus — and how he knew he needed salvation like every other person — I admitted I needed salvation too.

I had been letting my life define my faith but understood I needed to let my faith define my life, no matter what that would mean or what people would think.

I was crying as I walked to the front and knelt down at a pew. A woman from the church led me into an office. There, she showed me from the Bible the path to salvation. I professed with my lips what I already knew in my heart: I am a sinner, Jesus Christ is the LORD, and I needed Him to save me. Because of His sacrifice, His blood, and His love, it was enough!



Jessica and her husband attended the IBJM Four-Day Focus seminar just over a year after she trusted Jesus as her Messiah and Savior. She commented, “The IBJM Four-Day Focus was an awe-filled blessing for Nathan and me.”

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